



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 13: Good

Suggested Week of Use: August 27, 2023

Core Passage: Lamentations 3:19-33

News Story Summary

In June, the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) released its annual Global Peace Index, which ranks countries according to their peacefulness. The rankings were based on three key elements: ongoing conflict, safety and security, and militarization. The findings from 163 countries showed that global peacefulness declined for the ninth consecutive year. Over the last fifteen years, global peacefulness has declined by about five percent. In fact, since 2008, only two years have shown a rise in peacefulness. Conflicts in Ethiopia, Ukraine, Mali, and Myanmar helped make 2022 the deadliest year since the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

Overall, eighty-four countries improved their peacefulness score, while seventy-nine regressed. Countries considered most peaceful were Iceland, Denmark, New Zealand, and Austria. The least peaceful country was Afghanistan, followed by Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United States ranked 131st.

The study also found that violence cost the world \$17.5 trillion last year, driven largely by the conflicts in Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Sudan.

For more about this story, search “2023 Global Peace Index.”

Engage

To supplement Engage, encourage adults to suggest the most peaceful and least peaceful nations in the world. Allow a few volunteers to explain why they chose particular nations. Share information from the Global Peace Index, noting that Iceland was most peaceful, while Afghanistan was least peaceful. Note that the United States ranked 131. Ask: *How does that make you feel?* Affirm that the ranking could lead to worry or fear. Say: *It might even tempt us to lose hope.* Tell adults that today’s session encourages us to seek God’s peace and to nurture the hope only He can provide in the midst of chaos around us. Say: *As Jeremiah looked at the destruction around him, he still found hope in God. We can learn a lot from his example.*

Challenge

To supplement Challenge, remind the group of the findings from the Global Peace Index. Ask: *How can we encourage one another in the face of not only individual hardships, but also the violence we see around us?* Sing or read the words of “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” (No. 96, *Baptist Hymnal*, 2008) which is based on Lamentations 3:22-23. Close with prayer, asking God to help the group find hope even during times of despair.